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MEDIA

Bill Cosby Team Begins Public Defense Campaign

By **GRAHAM BOWLEY** and **SYDNEY EMBER** JULY 22, 2015

Bill Cosby's legal team pressed forward on Wednesday with a vigorous public defense of the entertainer, arguing that while Mr. Cosby acknowledged embarrassing personal details in a legal deposition 10 years ago, he admitted to no crime, a fact they say has been lost in the recent wave of media coverage.

"There has been a good deal of confusion, and perhaps a better word would be misrepresentation, regarding the deposition testimony which has been filtering out in excerpt form," a lawyer for Mr. Cosby, Monique Pressley, said in a phone interview. "There is no criminal conduct here. Nothing within the deposition moves the ball forward for those people accusing Mr. Cosby of criminal activity."

Ms. Pressley, a lawyer in Washington who is newly representing Mr. Cosby, took to television shows like ABC's "Good Morning America" and "Shepard Smith Reporting" on Fox News Channel as part of a whirlwind series of interviews aimed at defending Mr. Cosby.

Her appearances came a day after other lawyers for Mr. Cosby filed papers in federal court seeking to block the full release of his deposition in a 2005 lawsuit, parts of which became public earlier this month.

In the legal filing on Tuesday, Mr. Cosby's lawyers asserted that the entertainer had been damaged by some news media accounts that they said inaccurately portrayed his testimony in the deposition, by suggesting that Mr. Cosby had admitted to drugging women so he could molest them.

Mr. Cosby, 78, has strongly denied such accusations. The lawyers also criticized the fact that the deposition in the case was released at all.

Ms. Pressley, in the phone interview, said that her role was to draw public attention to the arguments made in the legal filing, and she echoed its contention that Mr. Cosby was being portrayed unfairly. She said she would not go beyond what his lawyers said in their document.

She said people needed to understand the context of Mr. Cosby's comments in his deposition, specifically that Quaaludes were a legal drug in the 1970s that many people used during consensual sexual encounters.

She also said that while Mr. Cosby had admitted to having extramarital affairs, these were a private matter.

"I don't understand why that's news," she said. "A man having an affair or two or 20, even extramarital affairs, to me is not a news item. It's history."

The 2005 lawsuit, brought by Andrea Constand, a former Temple University basketball manager who accused Mr. Cosby of drugging and molesting her, was settled in 2006. In the deposition, Mr. Cosby, who has been married since 1964, described in candid terms a number of extramarital affairs, and admitted to obtaining Quaaludes to give to young women with whom he wanted to have sex.

For several days, Mr. Cosby's advisers declined to comment on the deposition. But the filing on Tuesday, along with Ms. Pressley's on-the-record pronouncements, suggest the team's strategy is to proceed on three broad fronts: 1) to cast Mr. Cosby's use of drugs during sex as a widely accepted

practice four decades ago; 2) to assert that his testimony does not change his consistent denials that he did anything criminally wrong; and 3) to argue that it was a mistake for the court documents to be released.

While some news articles following the release of excerpts from his testimony suggested that Mr. Cosby had been “drugging” women, others presented a balanced account of Mr. Cosby’s remarks, noting that he said the drug-taking and sex had been consensual.

Ms. Pressley joined Mr. Cosby’s team of advisers recently. Last week, she had made another appearance on “Good Morning America” as a legal analyst asked to speak about the Cosby case.

While Ms. Pressley said it was too early to know the full legal ramifications of the release of the deposition, she claimed that it would help Mr. Cosby in any criminal investigation because he admitted only to consensual sex.

Mr. Cosby still faces two defamation cases, in Massachusetts and in California; a civil case in California; and a criminal investigation into a complaint brought by a woman in Los Angeles.

Mr. Cosby’s lawyers have been trying to have the California lawsuit, which was filed by Judy Huth, dismissed and had asked the California Supreme Court to review the case. Ms. Huth alleges that in 1974, when she was 15, Mr. Cosby forced her to perform a sex act on him at the Playboy Mansion.

On Wednesday, the California Supreme Court denied the Cosby team’s petition for review, and the lawyer for Ms. Huth, Gloria Allred, said in a statement that she wanted to depose Mr. Cosby as soon as possible.

Ms. Huth is one of more than two dozen women who have come forward to allege that Mr. Cosby sexually assaulted them in some way.

On “Good Morning America,” Ms. Pressley was asked by the host George

Stephanopoulos, “All of these women, more than two dozen women, all of these women are liars?”

“I’m not making conclusions,” Ms. Pressley responded, “and you know that I can’t, about whether someone is lying or not. What I am saying is that Mr. Cosby has denied the accusations that have been lodged thus far. The sheer volume, or number of people, who are saying a particular thing does not make it true.”

Ms. Pressley also defended Mr. Cosby’s response in the deposition to a question about an episode in 1976. He was asked whether one woman was capable of consenting to sexual intercourse after he gave her Quaaludes.

Ms. Pressley said Mr. Cosby’s reply — “I don’t know” — should be taken in context.

“What he was speaking to in the deposition, if you look at it contextually, is her state of mind, which no person, as you know, can testify to,” she said on “Good Morning America.”

Public relations experts said there was a potential tactical advantage in having a female lawyer serve as an advocate on television for Mr. Cosby.

Andrew D. Gilman, the chief executive of the crisis communications firm CommCore Consulting Group, said that Ms. Pressley “may convince some people, and she helps credibility a little bit.”

But he said the Cosby team’s attempt to shift the blame by characterizing the entertainer as a victim of unfavorable media reports would likely resonate only with his supporters, and that a better way forward would be for Mr. Cosby to make some sort of admission or express remorse himself.

Ms. Pressley denied that her remarks represented a new strategy, and she said that Mr. Cosby’s lawyers had been speaking through the courts.

She said she could not speak to how Mr. Cosby reacted to the recent publication of the deposition, nor would she say whether Mr. Cosby would make any public statements. The world was already hearing his point of view, she insisted. “When his lawyers speak, he speaks,” she said.

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Cosby pushes back on damaging deposition



Maria Puente, USA TODAY

7:04 p.m. EDT July 23, 2015



(Photo: Matt Rourke, AP)

Bill Cosby is finally coming out of his crouch to defend himself against multiple sex-abuse allegations, hiring a new lawyer/spokesperson and pushing back in court against a deposition that has further damaged his reputation.

After months of near total silence, Cosby is speaking out through his new public spokeswoman, Washington attorney Monique Pressley. She's started making the media rounds, going on camera to reject accusations from dozens of women who have publicly accused Cosby of drugging and sexually assaulting them in episodes dating back to the 1960s.



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Watch: Bill #Cosby's attorney tells @AlisynCamerota that offering drugs isn't a crime cnn.it/1g8cOBa

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Pressley said Thursday that Cosby's accusers, their lawyers and the media have unfairly tried to convict Cosby by ignoring facts and taking "out of context" Cosby's own words about his behavior towards women contained in his deposition from a 10-year-old civil lawsuit against him. The suit was filed by Andrea Constand, a Temple University basketball official who accused Cosby of drugging and assaulting her at his home in 2004.

Pressley says the media coverage of Cosby so far has been marked by unbalanced reporting, salacious headlines and false descriptions of what Cosby said in his 1,000-page deposition, which so far is fully available to only a few news organizations.

The volume and number of accusations do not add up to guilt, she says.

"My primary focus is to try to ensure that the reporting by the media is paying attention to the facts" in Cosby's latest legal filings, Pressley told USA TODAY. "I am the highlighter, pointing to these facts: There has been no charge of criminal conduct, no conviction and no admission of criminal conduct by Mr Cosby."

Instead, she said, "There's no there there. (The media) have picked out things they wanted to be seen and heard and then they shut down (access to the deposition) and that's not balanced."



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Bill Cosby's camp is firing back – finally. Monique Pressley, one of Bill Cosby's new attorney, says there's been a rush to judgement, and the media is cherry picking what info to share.... We agree...



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Cosby has been mostly silent in the face of mounting allegations, in part because when he denied them through his lawyers, some of his accusers filed defamation suits against him, charging that he labeled them liars by saying he didn't do it.

"You have the right to deny and defend yourself, and by saying that something did not happen or denying it does not mean you are calling someone a liar," Pressley said.

Pressley is already getting critical tweets for taking on Cosby's case, a reflection of the generally toxic nature of the public debate surrounding Cosby since the rape allegations first re-emerged last fall.



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"I'm getting Twitter feedback of all sorts, from 'Bravo!' and 'Way to go,' to 'You're getting money from a serial rapist,' and 'Shame on you' – it runs the gamut," she said. It doesn't matter, she said. "I believe in the work I am doing."

Monique Pressley is a great attorney. She is working it in this CNN interview about Bill Cosby — Dom (@MsDomi13) July 23, 2015 (<https://twitter.com/MsDomi13/status/624196068213948416>)

She spoke after Cosby's legal team in Philadelphia went back to federal court on Thursday to ask a judge to hold Constand's attorney, Dolores Troiani, responsible for the leak of the deposition, which may have violated federal court rules.

Under such [rules \(https://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/frap/rule_30\)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/frap/rule_30), court reporters are officers of the court who are not supposed to release without permission a copy of a deposition to anyone except the judge, the lawyers and the parties to a suit. "We believe there was a failure on a number of different levels and in direct contradiction to a number of procedures covering court rules, the code of ethics for court reporters and the confidentiality agreement," Pressley said.

The deposition has furthered damaged Cosby's tattered reputation by revealing his descriptions of how he obtained prescriptions of a sedative to give to women he sought for sex. He says these encounters were consensual; his accusers say they show part of his pattern of behavior in encounters with women.

Pressley says these encounters date back decades, to a time when the sedative quaaludes was common in social settings. Nothing Cosby did then was coercive, she says. Critics who point to this behavior as damaging to his standing as a conservative public moralist are forgetting that people can change, she said.

"It doesn't mean that 40 years later he can't offer words of wisdom about ways to do things and not do things," she says. "You can label him a hypocrite if you want but don't label him a serial rapist because you find him hypocritical. And a good deal of that (kind of conflation) is going on now."



USA TODAY

New Bill Cosby revelations are 'devastating'

(<http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/people/2015/07/19/bill-cosby-new-york-times-drugging-women/30388139/>)

Cosby settled Constand's suit in 2006. It was supposed to have been placed under a confidential seal that covered the lawyers, the parties and other court officials. But the contents have gone public anyway, partly through the order ([/story/life/people/2015/07/06/cosby-said-he-got-drugs-to-give-women-for-sex/29788893/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/people/2015/07/06/cosby-said-he-got-drugs-to-give-women-for-sex/29788893/)) of U.S. District Judge Eduardo Robreno, and partly through a leak to the New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/07/business/media/document-cosby-case.html>) from a court reporter last week.



USA TODAY

Bill Cosby: The lawyers weigh in

(<http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/people/2015/07/07/bill-cosby-lawyers-weigh-in-drug-revelation/29807517/>)

Cosby's lawyers, led by Temple University board president Patrick O'Connor, blame Troiani for the leak because it came from the court reporting service she hired to take Cosby's deposition over four days in 2005. Cosby wants the judge to sanction her and reinforce the confidentiality agreement covering the Constand settlement.

Troiani did not return a call about the latest development. But she is pursuing an effort to open up the Constand lawsuit and make all documents involved public. And the two legal teams have traded accusations over who supposedly violated the confidentiality clause first.

It's unclear when Robreno will rule on any of the new legal filings in the Constand lawsuit.

The Constand case is just one of several civil lawsuits against Cosby filed by accusers or groups of accusers whose allegations are too old to pursue in criminal court. Some are suing him for defamation, but one accuser, Judy Huth, filed a lawsuit last year in California accusing him of "sexual misconduct" for allegedly molesting her at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles 40 years ago when she was 15.



USA TODAY

No charges for Bill Cosby in Playboy case

(<http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/people/2014/12/17/bill-cosby-no-charges-playboy-judy-huth-case/20524599/>)

Huth first tried to get criminal charges filed against Cosby, and when that effort failed, she turned to civil court. Cosby has been trying to get Huth's lawsuit thrown out but the California Supreme Court late Wednesday declined to do so.

Huth's lawyer, women's rights attorney Gloria Allred, was exultant at the news and vowed to make Cosby appear for a deposition.

"We are looking forward to Mr. Cosby answering questions under oath at his deposition and we will continue to seek justice for our courageous client, Judy Huth," said Allred, who represents 17 Cosby accusers.